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Commission for Social Development
Forty-ninth session
9-18 February 2011
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: poverty eradication

Statement submitted by Foundation for the Rights of the Family, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2011/1.

10-65984 (E) 130111

Please recycle

Statement*

1. The family is the cornerstone of society, a unit of production and consumption. It is essential to the education of children and youth and to the stabilization of adults, the place where children, the elderly, the sick and disabled receive emotional and practical support. Families have been and continue to be a bulwark against poverty. When poverty and unemployment hit, families are often the last resource.

2. The family unit is also a powerful agent of social change. Factors such as demography, environment, population, fertility, ageing and social development are ultimately influenced by family behaviour and the decisions taken within the family. This particular role of the family as a source of support should be recognized and supported by policies and programmes.

3. Population policies, family policies and family well-being are closely related to economic development and to increasing the income level and the quality of life of the poor.

4. The main causes for social exclusion are: poverty, gender, age, disease, drugs and alcohol dependence. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals, among others, aim to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

5. Social welfare should be more clearly directed towards the root cause of poverty. It should be an integral element in a broad strategy of increasing employment as well as the productivity of weaker segments of society. A central element in this strategy is productive employment. For those who cannot work, sufficient support should be given through security and special benefits.

6. Poverty represents not only material insufficiencies but also a denial of rights and a transgression of human dignity. In many cases, families with children suffer as a result of the unemployment of both parents and are compelled to resort to charity. Poverty permeates all aspects of family life and is also transmitted from generation to generation.

7. A two-tracked strategy should be to link families with global issues, such as poverty, drugs, globalization and social integration; and to report on the situation and needs of poor families in selected countries.

Declaration of the rights of the family

8. Societies worldwide recognize that families have a number of social functions and responsibilities. But families have also rights.

9. The International Conference on Population (Cairo, 5-13 September 1994) implicitly recognizes the rights of the family alongside its functions in chapter V of its Programme of Action entitled "The family, its roles, rights, composition and structure".

10. The explicit articulation of the responsibilities and rights of the family can be a source of inspiration and a point of reference to support families and create family-friendly societies.

11. We therefore suggest that an open-ended group be created within the Commission for Social Development to review and extract relevant provisions on the family from national laws, international instruments and existing drafts.

* Issued without formal editing.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: poverty eradication

Statement submitted by Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2011/1.

10-65990 (E) 130111

Please recycle

Statement

1. The trauma throughout the world is graphically evidenced in the flight from rural areas to foreign cities, and the subsequent growth of immigrant detention camps, city slums, and prisons. Wars, economic crises, and corruption combine to drive millions into the lowest levels of physical, mental, and psychological insecurity.

2. Who are those so confined and imprisoned, and what are their needs? They are, for the most part: persons living in poverty, often with poor education and poor job training, making their economic survival difficult. Many, as a result of precarious living, may also suffer from addictions to alcohol or drugs. Instability may further result in family dysfunction, neglect and/or abuse, mental illness, depression, and socially disabling diseases like AIDS. Concentrations of those thus socially disabled are high in some detention camps, higher in many slums and ghettos, and very high in most prisons. Prisons and slums, moreover, are both breeding grounds for unrest, violence, and crime, and feed each other in these matters. Magnitudes of persons in these centres are estimated to be 9.8 million prisoners worldwide, hundreds of millions in our slums, supplying the prisons, and more millions in detention camps.

3. World social health and security can be significantly enhanced by the social development and social reintegration of many of the millions of excluded, abandoned, and ostracized persons in immigration camps, slums, and prisons around the world, providing rehabilitation and successful re-entry rather than making these places of detention into places of social degeneration.

4. One important focus now is on improving the small farm agriculture process. Migration from rural areas has swelled the immigration camps and the slums of major cities, and hence contributed to the growth of our prisons. Yet, many countries are dependent on the production from small farms. This has often been relatively inefficient, but can be substantially increased by modest training in good farming practice and supportive agribusiness. Agricultural training centres can provide experienced consultations and opportunities for interns to learn by doing. Subjects can include good seed, fertilizer, harvesting, water supply and water usage, and agribusiness practices like produce storage, distribution, and marketing. The crisis in our detention centres, slums and prisons can therefore be eased by giving migrants from farms and others a new path to productive employment and dignity.

5. Agricultural training centres can be an important part of prisons where inmates can learn how to reintegrate into society. Produce from these training centres can help the destitute and lessen the costs of prisons and food aid centres. Agricultural training centres can also be established near slums of big cities, so as to attract not only current farmers but also the very poor in detention centres and slums, who would return to their farm environment if they had the promise of a good income. Decent work, such as farm production that is profitable and sustainable, can be key to trauma reduction and decent living.

6. Agricultural training centres should be an important part of a broader plan for education and vocational training for decent work and decent living. Good wages should be paid for meaningful service, and jobs should not be simply field work. Newer, low-cost technologies, such as DVDs and training via the Internet can supplement that education process.

10-65999

7. Spreading restorative justice and dignity, through the social development and social integration of many millions of excluded and ostracized persons in the world's detention centres, slums and prisons can result in easing the food crisis, and contribute to better social health and more national productivity. It can reduce unrest and crime, and lower total costs for police, judiciary, detention centres, jails, prisons, and welfare.

Note: Statement also endorsed and supported by Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, a NGO in consultative status with the Council.

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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: poverty eradication

Statement submitted by Associated Country Women of the World, International Confederation of Christian Family Movements, International Council of Psychologists, International Council of Women, International Federation for Family Development, International Federation for Home Economics, International Inner Wheel, International Kolping Society, Soroptimist International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2011/1.

10-66362 (E) 130111

Please recycle

Statement*

There is a persistence of poverty situations, in spite of commitments and programmes of action to eradicate poverty, at both national and international levels. The distance existing between respective administrations and the social reality of hunger and malnutrition could point to a possible cause for the lack of solutions and the resultant persistence.

Widespread poverty particularly affects developing countries. Deficient or non-existent infrastructure services, injustice and corruption can create social dysfunction, which can be further exacerbated by natural disasters, such as drought, as well as by armed conflicts, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which can wipe out vast population areas in numerous countries.

The eradication of poverty requires universal access to basic social services such as education, health care, safe water supply and sanitation measures.

Poverty, however, is also part of the social structure of several developed countries, that "fourth world" that arises unexpectedly before our eyes.

The considerable distance between the dehumanizing situation of poverty and a remote administrative system calls for interceding agencies, and there is no more effective go-between than the family; the safety net where the basic needs are met, even in crisis situations, such as poverty, unemployment, delinquency, drug addiction and HIV/AIDS. Children, youth, the disabled and elderly members all benefit from a readily available network, such as the family, concurrent to State infrastructures.

All over the world, families are as different as they are alike. Families are essential to the world's future, and are the cradle of generations to come. Everywhere the strengths and weaknesses of families reflect the fabric of society. As the world's basic human relationship, the family has survived thousands of years, adapting to changing socio-economic conditions and the progress of humanity.

Greater attention should hence be focused on families and on promoting awareness of the contribution made by families the world over.

A family dimension should therefore also be implicit in all policies and documents related to poverty.

* Issued without formal editing.

10-66362